

# DCFS Weekly Update From the State Office

Monday, August 20, 2001

## National Scene-Congress

*By Richard Anderson*

### **The Act To Leave No Child Behind**

This Act (S. 940/H.R.1990), introduced by Senator Dodd (D-CT) and Representative Miller (D-CA), is an omnibus bill that is intended to pull together most of the major national issues and initiatives for children and youth. Some of the specific items covered in the bill are unmet health care, educational, housing, income support, child protection, and youth development. Title VIII of this large bill is where you will find child abuse proposals. There is an emphasis on providing more services for youth to find stability after foster care and more options for families to prevent placement. If interested, you can log on to <http://www.cdfactioncouncil.org/act.htm> for summaries of sections of this bill.

### **Child Protection/Alcohol And Drug Partnership Act**

This Act, introduced by Senator Snowe (R-ME), Senator Rockefeller (D-WV), and Representative Rangel (D-NY) is aimed at focusing service coordination between substance abuse and child welfare. It would allow states to do a better job at meeting the Adoption Safe Families Act (ASFA) goals. The Senate version contains a focus on ensuring that children from homes where substance abuse is the deterrent to safety are provided safe and stable homes. The Act provides for treatment services for families that are in the child welfare system. It is proposed that \$1.9 million in grants would be provided to states over five years.

## Case Process Reviews

*By Linda Wininger*

This is the time to be especially aware of the compliance issues required in the case process review. However, I'm a bit worried that you are lacking information about the case process review, so here are the facts:

**Out-Of-Home (Foster Care)**–The period of time that will be reviewed is July through December 2001. That means we are a month and a half into it. Here are some of the areas to pay particular attention to as indicated by the Quality Assurance Scans your supervisors have been submitting to the Office of Service Review.

1. **Second Visits**–In every month the percentage of visits to the child is above the passing rate on the first visit and below it on the second visit. Children are often visited only once in the month. Each of the six months is reviewed so if we fail on the second visit for each month, so that's six categories that we fail in.
2. **Creation of the Service (Child and Family) Plan**–Be sure that you invite everyone who should be there. This includes the Guardian ad Litem, stepparent, Mental Health representative, educational representative, and law enforcement if applicable. I'm thinking that many times these people may be invited but don't choose to be involved. All you need to do is be sure you document that they were invited (to the Family Team Meeting or such). So, document who was invited to

participate and then who did participate. If the problem is that you aren't including them, please start including them!

A couple of other quick items are as follows: Document private conversations with the child (these should happen each month); get the dental and medical health checks done on time or if you can't, document why it was not done on time; and get the Service (Child and Family) Plan done within the 45 days.

Remember that this is the most scrutinized area. There are by far more items checked in foster care than in the other service areas.

**In-Home (Home-Based)**–The period of time reviewed is from September to December 2001. Here are some items to be especially aware of:

1. Initial Plan–The initial service plan must be completed within 30 days of the CPS case closure or from the date services were court ordered.
2. Involving individuals in the development of the current service plan–The ones that where we score low are the stepparent, the target child, and other professionals. If these individuals were invited but declined to be involved, then document that. If they were not invited, please start inviting them!

Other than that you look good!

**Child Protection Services**–We are doing well in the Quality Assurance Scans in this area. Just keep it up!

You are all doing great work. My thinking is that knowing where to focus can really be helpful. If you want more information on what Office of Services Review looks at in each of the areas, visit the DCFS website at <http://www.hsdcs.state.ut.us/>, then select the "Office of Services Review" tab on the bottom left of the screen.

## A Note Of Practice Model Encouragement And Balance

*By Richard Anderson*

It is very apparent that there is much investment being made by each one of you toward passing the qualitative and case process reviews. The energy I feel in each office signals a real commitment to having success on these reviews. Passing the reviews is really important, but it is not the most important outcome. The real outcome will be there as we continue to implement the consistent practices of our model and become proficient in the skills that produce the best outcomes for children and families. The overall goal is to have a practice that can be implemented with each family that provides for their unique needs leading to safety, permanence, and well-being. The Practice Model leads us to a more consistent way of approaching our work. This gives us an improved environment to study and improve our work and increases confidence in our abilities to reach the most effective outcomes in the least amount of time. I ask each of you to envision our division when new employees are trained in the exacting skills of the model and those that have been here are proficient in its application. The picture I get is one of a truly disciplined, effective, and successful organization that deserves the respect of the communities we serve. I know that there

is currently a great deal of respect for all of you and what you do. There will be an increase of trust and respect in the future.

## Save This Date!

*By Midge Delavan*

The Child Welfare Institute will happen on October 15, 16, and 17 this year in Provo. We are looking forward to some exciting presentations that speak to issues we face every day, such as the needs of substance abusing parents. We are responding to requests to include more clinically oriented information. We will honor excellent casework and generally get together for our annual child welfare feast for the mind. We will also feast together on lunch on Wednesday, October 17, 2001.

Registration requests will be out in September. Plan to join the celebration as we seek new ways to creatively serve children and families.

## Substance Abuse Services

*By Richard Anderson*

We know that well over half of the families to whom we provide services need substance abuse treatment. This is not a Utah phenomenon. The national focus on this issue has been brought about by the recognition that families cannot meet ASFA time frames and fulfill the treatment time frames for substance abuse. There is a large discussion on the three clocks of ASFA, TANF, and substance abuse treatment.

Recently, I attended a conference that presented many of the models being used in various states to bring child welfare and substance abuse services together. I attended with Patrick Fleming (director of the State Division of Substance Abuse), LaRay Brown (DCFS Salt Lake Valley Region Director), Sue Bodell (Salt Lake Valley Foster Family Association President), and Adam Trupp (deputy to the Administrator of the Courts). We will be asking for your ideas and support in implementing a stronger tie between the two agencies. I encourage all of you to get to know your local substance abuse staff in the counties.

## Third National Kinship Care Conference

*By Shawnee Barnes*

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) held its Third National Kinship Care Conference in Chicago on July 25-27, 2001. The theme of this conference was "Sustaining Kinship Ties: Permanency and Beyond." This conference focused on kinship care: the full-time care, nurturing, and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child. Kinship care allows a child to grow to adulthood in a family environment. Once strictly a private family function, kinship care today often involves children who are in the custody of the child welfare system. I had the privilege and pleasure of representing DCFS at this conference.

The conference offered a weeklong series of cutting-edge workshops, plenaries, and preconference sessions focused on public policy, understanding the kinship care process, and the roles of kinship caregivers and the child welfare system. The wide range of workshops and plenary sessions dealt with issues such as guardianship, kinship adoption, support services for caregivers, and access to services, as well as partnerships and collaborations. Presentations were scheduled to address research and evaluation results, legislation and advocacy, cultural issues, and innovative practice and service delivery models from around the country. Some of the most important to DCFS were:

- Developing Policies and Programs that Support Kinship Care.
- Promoting Strength and Permanency in Kinship Care.
- Culturally Competent Services to Support Families Providing Kinship Care.

For those of you who are not familiar with CWLA, it was established in 1920 and is the nation's oldest and largest membership-based child welfare organization. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., CWLA strives to advance sound public policy on behalf of the more than three million abused, neglected, and vulnerable children served by its more than 1,150 public and private member agencies. To further its mission of preserving, protecting, and promoting the well-being of all children and families, CWLA conducts research, develops standards of best practice, hosts regional and national conferences, provides comprehensive, field-based consultation and professional development services, and is the largest publisher of child welfare materials in North America.

## To Make Your Life Easier...Using SAFE Optimally

*By Kathy Tollett*

### **How To Record A Staffing On An Out-Of-Home Service Plan**

For out-of-home cases, a multi-disciplinary staffing should be held before completing the Service Plan. SAFE provides the place to document these staffings in the SCF Service Plan window.

To record the PERSONS who participated: When you open the Staffing tab on Service Plan you will notice that there is a person area that shows in the middle of this screen. SAFE pulls this information from the Person tab in the SCF case. You can add or delete persons on this tab without affecting who appears on the Person tab on the case window. This tab shows who was invited, attended, and participated in the multi-disciplinary staffing. Whoever appears on this tab must have a selection entered in the Input column in order to finalize this screen. To add or delete a person you simply place the cursor in the person area on this screen and then click the right mouse button. A menu will appear and you then select the option you want. If you choose to add a person you will need to type in their name, last name first then first name. Select their relationship to the Primary person on the case, the type of input given, if minutes were requested, and when the minutes were sent out. This can now be printed out and placed in the family file or printed as a role for your meeting.

To record the staffing MINUTES: On this tab there is also a place for staffing minutes. If you have a tech or someone else take minutes in your staffing, the minutes can be

copied from Word onto this screen in SAFE. If you do not know how to toggle between programs call the SAFE Helpdesk for instructions.

To SAVE staffing information: To let SAFE know this tab is complete, you enter the date of the staffing and then save this information.

To PRINT a record of a staffing: Go to Function on the Menu bar and select reports. Among the options are two related to staffings: Staffing Roll and Staffing Summary. If you select Staffing Roll it will print the Multi-Disciplinary Staffing form with person information filled in. If you select Staffing Summary it will print the participants and the minutes from your staffing.

**For general comments, suggestions, or questions about the weekly updates, e-mail Carol Miller or call 801-538-4451.**

**For questions about policy or rules,  
e-mail Steve Bradford or call 801-538-8210.**

**For questions about SAFE,  
call the SAFE Help Desk at 801-538-4141.**